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TO WHOM ARE WE TO BELONG?

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**DEDICATED**

TO

HER MAJESTY'S PRINCIPAL SECRETARY OF STATE

FOR THE COLONIES.

BY A

**CANADIAN PROTECTIONIST.**

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## TO WHOM ARE WE TO BELONG?

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The present crisis, in commercial affairs, is one of general interest to the whole British Empire, and more or less to the whole family of nations. The giant trade of the first power in the world is in the transition state, and is advancing by hasty strides to absolute Free Trade. But to no portion of the universe is this vast commercial movement so important as the British North American Provinces. The remarks which apply to one of these Provinces will apply in part or in whole to all. I have therefore spoken of the Colonies collectively, though, I shall confine my illustrations to Canada exclusively, as my desire is to appeal to the interests and feelings of Canadians. Canada, labouring under the disadvantageous circumstances of position and climate, shut out from the seaboard, communicating with the Ocean by a long and dangerous river navigation, and suffering from a winter, whose severity can only be compared to that of Russia, is perhaps of all countries in the world, certainly of all parts of the British Empire, the one which needs the greatest weight of protection to its commercial and agricultural interests. But to found a claim to this protection, it is necessary to demonstrate—1st. That Canada will be enabled to repay that protection, 2nd. That the refusal on the part of the Imperial Government to protect the interests of Canada will be attended with injury to England. For the first proposition it is but necessary to glance at the geographical extent and natural capabilities of Canada, in order to give an affirmative answer.

Passing over the great tract of arable land, of the highest natural fertility, lying between Lake Erie, Lake Ontario, Lake Huron, and the western bank of the Ottawa, forming an area of eighteen millions of acres, capable of producing wheat—passing over the enormous and fertile wilderness to the north and north-west of Lake Huron—passing over large and arable tracts in still more northern latitudes, which may one day form the homes of a hardy and enterprising population of as yet unborn millions, and

confining our attention solely to Lower Canada. We find upwards of six millions of acres in the Eastern Townships, capable of producing wheat of the finest quality. We find millions of acres of wheat-land on the eastern bank of the Ottawa, and a soil admitting of cultivation to the very head of Lake Temiscaming. We find six millions of acres, reported to be fertile and adapted to the growth of corn, in the level and well watered valley of the Saguenay. The western banks of that river have been favourably reported in regard to agricultural capacities, while the vast and unexplored tract to the northward of the St. Lawrence and lying between the Ottawa & Saguenay estimated throughout their entire length, from mouth to mouth and from source to source, is, it has been well ascertained, capable of supplying every necessary of life up to the 49th parallel of latitude. Thus it is geographically demonstrated that the least productive or eastern portion of United Canada, is capable of supplying a sufficiency of wheat for the support of fifty millions of souls!! It has been said that the climate is of such rigour as to afford but a bare sustenance to the cultivators of the soil, and consequently prevent the production of any surplus supply. (a) But this statement is nullified by the fact that a considerable quantity of good wheat was annually exported from Districts adjacent to the St. Lawrence, both banks of which river are fitted for its production, *an export which has ceased from the Repeal of the Statute which had encouraged that supply*; the strongest proof that could be adduced of the beneficial effect of a judicious Legislation on the agricultural interests of Canada. (b) I do not attempt to assert that land in Canada will produce as much corn per acre for as little labour and at as little cost as in more genial climes; but I maintain that cleared land will always produce a surplus, though in comparison with such regions as the Western States, a small one, and that under a system of adequate protection the exportations from the Canadas would be equal to the demand in the English market. I make the admission that agriculture in Canada requires a greater application of labour than in the adjacent states, that it will not yield the same return, and that it has not the same facility of access to market; and I think it may be made apparent, that it should be the aim of Legislation

to encourage the application of that additional labour, and to give artificial advantages to the Canadian, which shall counterbalance the natural advantages possessed by the American farmer. If such advantages be withheld from the Canadian farmer, if the settler in the British Provinces has to contend against a rigorous climate, a comparatively sterile soil, and disadvantageous position, and is compelled to contrast his scarcely recompensed toil, with the greater ease and abundance of the farmer of Ohio, with the light labour, the fruitful soil, and genial climate, enjoyed by the inhabitants of the Western States; the Colonies will cease to be the depôt for British emigrants, and the whole tide of Trans-atlantic travel will be sunk in the fruitful and productive valley of the Mississippi. What will be the consequences? England will lose thousands of her subjects annually to an alien and rival country, whereas the same men settled within her own territories would form a salutary drain upon her redundant population, would extend her power and influence, consume her manufactures, and from the most wretched and useless, form the most happy and valuable portion of her population. Emigrants settled in the States are indeed lost to England, lost to her commerce, lost to her manufactures, lost to her government. Naturalized foreigners, are too often the rancorous enemies of their native country. The danger of an emigration exclusively to the States, is evident. Not merely are the emigrants wholly cut off from the empire, not merely do subjects become aliens, and friends turn into enemies, but while political, commercial, and manufacturing power is added to the grasping and ambitious Union, by an influx of natural born subjects of England, who might be retained within the dominions of the mother country, as her most faithful supporters and surest customers, the emigrant population finding prosperity and plenty apparently alone in a Republican country, finding independence and ease to them unknown under a Monarchical flag, seemingly only attainable on the soil of Democracy, will naturally form and propagate the conclusion, that such blessings flow not from the favourable situation, but the political institutions of America; a train of reasoning most dangerous to European establishments, and which, eventually, by the flux and reflux of the tide of emigration

may produce in England the revolutionary effect, wrought in France by the return of LaFayette's army.

The value of Canada to England, is a value which is both absolute and relative; which cannot readily be estimated and which can only be proved by its loss; *by that fell and mournful experiment, the severance of connection between the mother country and the Colony.*

England has, in protecting Canada, not merely to count upon a commercial monopoly, a field for emigration, relieving her of her surplus population, an exclusive market for her manufactures, and to estimate the value of a loyal subject, which will one day become a powerful ally; but to consider the avoidance of precisely opposite results, the loss of customers, the increase of rival manufactures, and the accession of strength to a rival and hostile power.

So much for general conjecture. Let us see if the anticipations of the future are born out by the experience of the past. When we look to the rapid advance of the British Provinces, in population, wealth and importance, when we look to the increased trade of Lower Canada, when we look to the rapid settlement of Upper Canada, when we reflect that such prosperity has arisen under a system of protective duties, has sprung not from the natural capabilities of the Colonies, but their artificial advantages, we must allow that the experience of the past is the most powerful of protectionist argument.—It is under the system of protection that Canada has made the most rapid strides in the race of improvement; that the trade, population and wealth of Lower Canada has so greatly increased; that Upper Canada has grown from the wilderness; that the British Provinces annually afford a prosperous home to thousands of British emigrants and that England has gained an almost exclusive market of nearly two millions of people. If such are the results of protection an opposite system of commercial policy will produce opposite results; and it is but fair to conclude that benefits arising from the protective system, and being dependent upon it, will, should it be abolished, be destroyed with it.

But, whatever may be the consequences of the withdrawal of protection from Canadian agriculture, and however heavy those consequences may actually be, they are but slight and trifling when compared with the

results to be anticipated from the withdrawal of the protective duties upon Canadian timber. This alteration is of a nature to give an advantage to the timber of the Baltic over that of Canada. The enactment of this alteration is founded on a professed calculation that the natural advantage of the Baltic over Canadian timber, consists solely in the difference of freight, and therefore provides for that difference alone, without taking into consideration the far heavier expences incurred in Canada in the felling and "getting out" of timber, consequent on the geographical position of the forests of the Baltic, and the great cheapness of serf, in comparison of free labour.

Not merely is this alteration sufficient in itself to alarm the Colonies, but it is, obviously, only the commencement of a complete removal of the protective timber duties. The declarations contained in the parliamentary speeches of the Free Trade party, set forward in the periodical press, are enough to strike panic into the whole commercial community of this Colony. These declarations are accompanied by fallacies, misrepresentations, and seemingly wilful fabrications of a nature to outrage the feelings and exasperate the passions of the entire Colonial population. Sentiments of this description, have been expressed by some of the first authorities in England, exclusive of those immediately concerned in carrying on Her Majesty's Government, the *London Times*, the organ chosen by the Premier for the first intimation of his intended policy, already shown this disposition, to tear the last remnant of protection from the Canadian timber trade, and a spirit of wanton antagonism to Colonial interests displayed by a variety of most unfounded assertions, receiving the support of Mr. Charles Butler in Parliament, and various respectable authorities in print, appears daily to gain ground. The total extermination of the timber trade is spoken of as a benefit at once to the morality and agriculture of Canada! This of the most important branch of the commerce of the country! It may indeed be called *the trade* of the country, so much greater is the capital invested in it, than in other business, so various are the interests connected with it, and so completely is the self interest of every class in the Colony impaired when it is injured. The proprietors of land, the settlers upon land, the wood-cutters, and raftsmen,



the ship-builders, all will suffer with the mercantile community. The sufferers have been enumerated, they are the whole population; but abolish their trade, you will benefit their morals! And agriculture is to be benefited by the destruction of the timber trade!! What tempts the first settler in the forest, the pioneer of the wilderness to build a shanty and clear a few acres from the bush? The prospect of a market for timber. What has brought an agricultural population to the banks of the Ottawa? The operations of the timber trade. It is not too much to assert that the entire agricultural emigration to British America has been caused by the market afforded to the exportation of timber. It is not too much to affirm that but for the timber trade with the exception of the sums expended by the Hudson's Bay and North West Companies, British capital would never have been invested in Canada; and consequently that agriculture would have been left to the native population alone. What progress it would have made, may be easily surmised.

But the timber trade is of an importance to Canada far exceeding the capital embarked in it. Before agriculture can be followed the land must be cleared, thus the timber trade gives a market to the produce of the forest, and to the first property of the settler. It creates a trade where otherwise there would be none; affords means for exporting and procuring a return from that which otherwise would be valueless, and by its operations creates an opening for agriculture. The timber trade gives employment to a great number of men who are employed in the felling and floating out of timber, thereby encouraging a great emigration, and giving a mode of life as wood-cutters and raftsmen to those who do not possess the means of becoming farmers. The wood-cutter is the Pioneer of the wilderness, and the business of the lumberer may be regarded as the harbinger of settlement, agriculture, and civilisation. Oh! but the lumberers are a very dissolute people! So are the English colliers—but is that any reason to close the coal pits? Nevertheless wood cutting is not less necessary to Canada than the supply of coal is to England. So much for this weighty argument on morality which has been so gratuitously used in the English Parliament. Now for what the timber trade really is, any exportation of corn



the growth of the Colonies must depend upon the timber trade ; its prosperity giving an impetus to settlement and a consequent *bonus* to production ; thus the trade of the Province, consisting only in the produce of the forest and the farm may be regarded as a double trade , not as two distinct branches of traffic, but as two parts of a whole, harmoniously acting and reacting upon each other. To make this more manifest—had innovation been confined to the corn trade, the protection on the timber trade would have amounted to an indirect protection on corn, as it is impossible to extend the operations proper for supplying that trade without also extending agricultural settlement. On the other hand, had Canada received the boon of an exclusive monopoly of the supply of timber as compensation for the removal of the protection on corn, the protecting duties on corn might have been readily abandoned. But no, both trades are to be prostrated—Canada is to be deprived of her exports ; where then is she to find her markets ? It may be replied, the British Provinces can obtain internal markets sufficient for their produce, and we may be referred to their marine and mineral wealth. This answer is readily met.—Free Trade will prevent the developement of the mining capabilities of the Colonies. For instance, the stoves manufactured at Three Rivers, from Canadian iron, and by Canadian workmen, are better than those imported from Scotland ; but, the Scotch article is cheaper and consequently drives the Canadian stoves out of the market. The country is well adapted to the manufacture of every description of hardware, there is abundance both of coal and wood, and labour cheaper than in the adjacent States ; but how is it possible to work upon mines to a profit, and manufacture for the wants of the population, in the face of a Free Trade, with a country where labour is at the very minimum of remuneration ? Then the Fisheries. These indeed might afford a market for agricultural produce, and a splendid one, capable of being wrought to any extent, with capacities for supplying both continents of America, the West Indies, the Mediterranean, Spain, Portugal, Italy, and the entire continent of Europe. What are these Fisheries but the dishonored cuckoo's nest of the Colonies ? What are they but a magnificent proof of English neglect and Colonial apathy ?

Wrought by American seamen for the benefit of American merchants ; they are the fishing ground of a neighbouring people, who do not possess fishing grounds of their own. These fisheries are the nursery of the American seamen of both the naval and commercial marine, and the source of enormous profits to the Boston merchants. By the simple operation of a naturalization act, these benefits to the Americans might be utterly destroyed ; the profits of the American transferred to the British merchant ; 150,000 citizens of the New England States become British subjects ! Thus the market, which is afforded by the fisheries benefits the American to the exclusion of the Canadian farmer and the American manufacturer to the exclusion of the British manufacturer. Thus Canada is deprived of the only internal markets she can obtain as a British Colony those produced by the pursuits of mining and fishing and threatened with the total extinction of the timber as well as the provision trade. This brings us to the consideration of questions of vital importance. If Canada is to lose her exports, she must necessarily be deprived of imports, for no country can be an importer which has nothing to export. The first, though far from the most important question raised by this subject is, how are we to pay the taxes ? how is the revenue to be supplied, if the present resources are to be destroyed ! The answer is, by direct taxation. But should direct taxes be *imposed they will be resisted* ; on the very attempt to tax the Seigniories, the *habitans* will rise *en masse* ; there are parts of the country inhabited by a British population, who will not be a whit less refractory. If the Clergy Reserves have created so much heart burning, if local taxes have been so strenuously opposed, what will be the effect of a land tax ? (for there are but two direct taxes which can be imposed upon Canada, a poll tax and a property tax). How is it possible to levy such taxes on the Eastern Townships, against the will of the inhabitants ? how is it possible to wring them from the settlers of the Ottawa, or to obtain them from perhaps any part of Upper Canada ? The answer to these queries is plain ; the very attempt at imposing direct taxes will throw the country into an intermittent fever of continued insurrections, will make every loghouse a fort, every peasant a rebel, every squatter an assassin, every

settlement the theatre a revolt, and the whole Colony the scene of that most demoralising conflict, a *guerilla* war. But there are other considerations even more vitally important than those of the revenue. What is to become of the trade? Various are the answers to this enquiry. That the late alterations are but the opening of a flood-gate of Free Trade, which will dismember the Empire, is the opinion of almost every Colonist. There are those therefore who take the following ground, "set your house" in order, provide against the worst, decide your political fate, leap the gulf which you cannot avoid, take the advantages (if you can find any) of Free Trade, as well as its evil, aim at obtaining the carrying trade. The completion of the wishes of this party were deferred by Mr. Gladstone's despatch, upon the subject of the petition of the Montreal Board of Trade. That despatch deceives no one; any man of penetration can trace the same policy in this despatch, as that which prompted Sir Robert Peel to refuse the reduction of the duty on corn when asked as a boon in favour of Australia, *the policy of blinding the the Protectionists in regard to an intended abolition of duty*. The party of politicians in question count on total and unrestricted Free Trade, and on the opening of the St. Lawrence to the navigation of the world. In expecting the first, there can be but little doubt that they are right, and the second must follow as a necessary consequence. To remove protection from Canadian exports and close the ports of Canada against foreign shipping would be unjust and impossible. England could not do, and great as she is, and powerful as she is, *England dare not do it*. These persons then suppose our commerce will be with the States, they consider separation and annexation to the Union as necessary consequences which unquestionably they would be, and regard England as willing to surrender the Colonies. If the Colonies are to receive a Free Trade, there can be no reason why England should burden herself with their military defence, nor in fact would the British nation undergo expense to protect the market of a foreigner. These politicians expect that the unrestricted navigation of the St. Lawrence, and the entire abolition of Colonial Duties will give a carrying trade equal to the whole of their present commerce. How are we to pay the taxes?

what is there to meet the expenses of the Provincial Government? They reply—raise the revenue, for defraying the entire expenses of Government, by tolls on the Canals, the very means of transit by cheapening which they hope to compete with the Americans in the carrying trade! What! tolls upon the canals? Their Finance has destroyed their Economy and their arguments are extinguished. If the present commerce is destroyed without the establishment of a transit trade to replace it, what trade can the country obtain? The answer is obviously none. In the supply of provisions, climate, soil and position render competition with the States impossible. Canada presents a vast extent of fertile soil, the Eastern Townships are superior in natural advantages to the adjoining portions of the Northern States, an enormous tract, considerably larger than the whole State of New York to the North of the St. Lawrence, is described as generally level, well watered and capable of supplying the necessaries of life. From its geographical position it could not at any time or under any circumstances form an exporting country. Upper Canada cannot compete with the Western States, Lower Canada cannot compete with the Eastern, then what can Canada give to England? Nothing. Is that any reason that she should find a market in the Union? The Union does not want her timber; for provisions, it will undersell her all over the world. Then what can she give the Union? Without exports there can be no imports, Canada cannot have a foreign market, then she must find a home market.—Countries with a scanty population and an extended territory are not fitted for manufacturing. True, but they cannot have agriculture without consuming manufactures, and if they cannot import they must produce them. What makes the adjoining portion of the neighbouring Republic more wealthy than Lower Canada? The manufacturing industry of a portion of New England which by affording an immediate market, causes agriculture to be followed where otherwise it would not be, and places that under tillage, which would otherwise be forest. The inference is evident—if Canada be not supplied by an external trade, she must supply herself; she must have internal trade to remunerate agriculture—to encourage emigration and meet the wants of her popu-

lation. But with Free Trade and connection with England, or with *any commercial or manufacturing country*, to manufacture for herself, to obtain an internal market and an internal trade, is impossible. No sooner would money be put into circulation by the commencement of a manufacture, than it would go into the pocket of the distant manufacturer and the home produced article would be driven out of the market. However glorious Free Trade may be, as an abstract theory, however beneficial to old and established communities, nothing is surer than that infant manufactories require protection. To become self manufacturing, protection must be obtained to encourage the establishment of manufactures. *This protection could not be granted by the British Empire neither would it be obtained by annexation to the American Union.* One of two things must occur to Canada by the operation of a Free Trade—either she remains a dependency, in which case a portion of the country returns to the primitive forest, the commercial community disappear, the trade of emigration flows to more favoured lands, commerce subsides to the export of a few furs from the North West and probably a little copper from Lake Superior; in return for which comes an adequate supply of hardware, and the population becoming a race of mere cultivators of the soil, consume their own produce on their respective farms, build their own habitations, weave and wear their own wool, and their own linen, use their own leather, distil their own liquor, make their own soap and their own candles, grow, prepare and use their own tobacco, and transact their petty business by patriarchal barter without the help of specie. Such a picture may be ascribed to levity or exaggeration, but nothing is a more serious matter of fact. On the other hand let us imagine Canada **INDEPENDENT!!** she manufactures for herself, heavy protective duties produce high prices, industry brings large profits and large wages, and consequently emigration flows in and agriculture, (also under the artificial stimulant of protective duties), receives encouragement. This is no pleasing picture, for it presents to our view the St. Lawrence without a single sail upon its placid surface, it shows us Canada deprived of external trade and reduced to the condition of a back State of the

American Union, without the fertility of the back States of the Union. But the only choice for the Colonist is the choice of the evils I have described. A question is now arising which ere long will agitate the Colonial Empire, that question is TO WHOM ARE WE TO BELONG?

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(a) A remark commonly applied to the entire Lower Provinces with the exception of the Eastern Townships.

(b) The Act in question limited the operations of the French Law of Common Inheritance to Farms exceeding a given number of acres and excepted farms of a smaller size from division by inheritance.

FINIS.

## APPENDIX.

It is not the intension of the Author of this little publication to question the policy of Sir Robert Peel, or the right of England to regulate her commerce as she thinks proper, he merely offers his humble representation of the consequences of the present commercial changes, on the British American Colonies, esteeming it to be the duty of every inhabitant of this Province to make the bearing of the question on Colonial interests fully understood in England, and avoiding assailing the imperial policy, point out the inevitable results of that policy so that both the mother country and the Colony looking respectively to their own particular, commercial, social, and political interests may determine at what sacrifice they will avoid resorting to the alternative of mutual separation.